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JACK OF DOVER,

HIS

QUEST OF INQUIRIE, OR HIS PRIVY SEARCH
FOR THE VERIEST FOOLE
IN ENGLAND.

A COLLECTION OF MERRY TALES PUBLISHED AT THE
BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

EDITED FROM A COPY IN THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.

370837
30.8.29

LONDON:
REPRINTED FOR THE PERCY SOCIETY.

M.DCCC.XLII.

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PREFACE.

THE following little tract is extremely curious, as forming one of the links between the wit of the middle ages, and that of modern times. There is scarcely one of the merry tales contained in it which has not its counterpart among the numerous Latin stories of the monks, which were popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On this account we are justified in supposing that it is only a reproduction of a work of a much earlier date than any of the known editions. It was perhaps one of the little black-letter books of the earlier times of printing in England.

There must have been an edition of the present work in or before 1601, for on the 3rd of August of that year, was entered in the Stationers' register, by W. Firebrand, the printer of the earliest

edition now in existence, “the second parte of Jack of Dover.” The present edition is reprinted from the copy of the earliest known edition now preserved among the books of the late Mr. Douce, in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The second part, or “Penniles Parliament,” was reprinted in the Harleian Miscellany, from an edition printed in 1608. In the Malone Library there is an edition printed at London in 1615.

The origin of the name of Jack of Dover appears to be unknown; and its application is not quite clear from the present book. Chaucer applies the name to some kind of article sold by the Cook:—

“And many a Jacke of Dover hast thou sold,
That hath bene twies hot and twies cold.”

THE COKE'S PROLOGUE.

JACKE OF DOVER,

HIS QUEST OF INQUIRIE, OR HIS PRIVY
SEARCH FOR THE VERIEST FOOLE
IN ENGLAND.

LONDON :

Printed for William Ferbrand, and are to be sold in
Popes head Alley, over against the Taverne doore,
neare the Exchange.

1604.

JACKE OF DOVERS QUEST OF INQUIRIE.

WHEN merry Jacke of Dover had made his privie search for the Foole of all Fooles, and making his inquirie in most of the principall places in England, at his returne home was adjudged to be the foole himselfe: but now, wearied with the motley coxcombe, he hath undertaken in some place or other to finde out a verier foole than himselfe. But first of all comming to London he went into Paules church, where, walking very melancholy in the middle ile with captaine Thingut and his fellowes, he was invited to dine at duke Humphries ordinarie, where amongst many other good stomackes that repayred to his bountifull feast, there came in a whole jury of pennillesse poets, who, being fellowes of a merry disposition (but as necessary in a common-wealth as a candle in a straw-bed) hee accepted of their company; and as from poets commeth all kind of foolerie, so he hoped by their good directions to find out this Foole of all Fooles so long lookt for: so thinking to passe away the dinner time with some pleasant chat, least (being overcloyde with too many delicates) they should surfet, he discovered to them his merry meaning, who being glad of so good an occasion

of mirth, instead of a cup of sacke and sugar for digestion, these men of litle wit began to make inquirie and to search for this aforesayde foole, thinking it a deede of charitie to ease him of so great a burthen as his motley coxcombe was, and because such weake braines as are now resident almost in every place might take benefite hereat. In this manner began the inquirie.

THE FOOLE OF HERFORDE.

UPON a time (quoth one of the jurie) it was my chaunce to be in the cittie of Herforde, when lodging in an inn I was tolde of a certain silly witted gentleman there dwelling, that wold assuredly beleeve all things that he heard for a truth, to whose house I went upon a sleeveles arrand, and finding occasion to be acquainted with him, I was well entertained, and for three dayes space had my bed and boord in his house, where amongst many other fooleries, I being a traveller made him beleeve that the steeple in Burndwood in Essex sayled in one night as far as Callis in Fraunce, and afterward returned againe to his proper place. Another time I made him beleeve that in the forest of Sherwood in Nottinghamshire were seene five hundred of the king of Spaines gallies, which went to besiege Robbinhoodes well, and that fourty thousand schollers with elderne squirts performed such a peece of service, as they were all in a manner broken and overthrowne in the forrest. Another time I made him beleeve that Westminster hall, for suspition of treason, was banished

for ten years into Staffordshire. And last of all, I made him beleeve that a tinker should be bayted to death at Canterbury for getting two and twenty children in a yeere: whereupon, to proove me a lyer, he tooke his horse and rode thither; and I, to verrifie him a foole, tooke my horse and rode hither. Well, quoth Jack of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolerie, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF HUNTINGTON.

AND it was my chaunce (quoth another of the jurie) upon a time to be at Huntington, where I heard tell of a simple shoemaker there dwelling, who having two litle boyes, whom he made a vaunt to bring up to learning, the better to maintaine themselves when they were men; and having kept them a yeere or two at schoole, he examined them, saying: My good boy (quoth he to one of them) what doest thou learne? and where is thy lesson? Oh, father, said the boy, I am past grace. And where art thou? quoth he to the other boy, who likewise answered, that he was at the divell and all his workes. Now, Lord blesse us, quoth the shoemaker, whither are my children learning? the one is already past grace, and the other at the divell and all his workes: whereupon he tooke them both from schoole, and set them to his owne occupation. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my mind was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of Fooles is not heere found that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF BEDFORD.

Not many yeeres ago (sayd another of the jurie) it was my chaunce to be at Bedford, where in the time of my continuance there, the wives of that same place strove to exceed one another in brave apparell, and shee deemed herselfe the best woman that could get her garments made of the most finest and strangest fashion; but, amongst the rest, there was a certaine drapers wife, that although she could not put all other women downe in her upper garments, she meant to exceed them in her lower; and therefore, when other women had their stockings of wosted, jersie, silke, and such like, she got her selfe a paire made of the finest satten, and which shee continually put on when she went abroad with her neighbours, and who but shee (for the same) was talkt of almost in every company. Thus for a long time bore she the bel away, and for that fashion exceeded all her neighbours wives. But now marke what happened in the end. Her husbände, being a jollie lustie olde man, on a time looking over the subsidy booke, founde himselfe therein five pound more than he was before; whereupon he presently went to maister Mayor of Bedford to get some abatement, who hearing of his wives fantasticke humour, and knowing how he kept her in bravely beyond other women, would not grant him any, saying: Oh, sir (quoth Maister Mayor), is it not great reason that sith your wife exceedes al other women in bravery, that you likewise exceede all other men in the Queenes

bookes? for shée, a Gods name, must be in her satten stockings; neither wooll nor wosted will serve turne: whose fault is that, pray you? To whom he replied, saying: Oh, pardon me, sir, I beseech your worship; I am an olde man, and not the first that have married with a wanton young woman, and youth coupled with age must needs have their owne swing. I tell your worshippe my good dayes be past; and now because I cannot please her above the knee, I must needes please her beneath the knee: at which merry speeches M. Mayor got the payment in the Queenes books for that time abated. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heare found that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF BUCKINGHAM.

THERE was of late (quoth another of the jurie) a certaine young man dwelling in Buckingham, who had long time (in the way of mariage) made sute unto a very rich widdow in the same towne, and to that purpose had spent much money; but all in vaine; for he had purchased no more favour at her handes, than he had when first he began his sute, Whereupon the young man (not meaning as yet to give over the same) went another way to worke, made it knowne to a cosen of his, being a merry gentleman of the same towne, who taking the matter in hand, went to this widdowes house, and tolde her of his kinsman, an olde

suter of hers, how he had now provided himself otherwise of a wife, and meant not to trouble her any further, and that he intended the next Sunday following to be askt in the church, but that he doubted she would forbid the banes; Not I, by my troth, quoth the widdow, nor any one for me. Whereupon the old gentleman procured her to set her hand to a bond of two hundred pound, with this condition: that neither she, nor any one for her, by any means should then or at any time after, forbid, or cause it to be forbidden: the which being done, away goes he, and wils his foresayd kinsman to haste to the church, and against the next Sunday following, bespeake the banes betwixt the widdow and himselfe. When Sunday came the widdow gets her up betimes in the morrow, decking herselfe in her best apparell, and withall she hyes unto the church, to heare who it was that her olde lover should marry. But when service was done, (contrary to her expectation) she heard that her owne name was askt unto him, she was so abashed, that she knew not what to do; yet durst not (for feare of forfeiting her bond) make any meanes to have the banes forbidden, but of force was content to let them alone; and so at the day appoynted, she was maryed to the young man, who prooved a very carefull husband, and long lyved they together in great love and unitie. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolerie, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF NORTHAMPTON.

IN like manner (quoth another of the jurie) there dwelled a certaine rich gentleman of late in the towne of Northampton, who being somewhat given to the old religion, was very charitable to the poore, and every day gave many a good almes at his doore; the which not a little greeved his wife, being a woman of a very covetous nature: but she having by good huswifery gathered together a pretty stocke of money, came unto her husband (not knowing how to bestow it of her selfe) and delivered it to him, being a bag of good old angels, and withall requested him to lay it out (for her use) upon some house or land, that if God should call him away, shee might the better maintaine herselfe afterward. The good old gentleman knowing his wives covetous nature, on this condition takes her bag of angels, promising with the same to buy her a house for ever. But so it hapned, that within few daies after he changed his wives double gold into single silver, and alwayes when he went abroad (in a merry humour) he gave of the same money to the poore, so bountiffully bestowing it that in a short time he had never a whit left. All this while the poore woman thought hee was espying her out a house; but at last marvelling she heard no news thereof, tooke occasion to moove her husband of it saying: I would gladly know good husband [quoth she] where the house is you promised to buy with my money? Oh, good wife, quoth he, it is in heaven, wife: thy money hath pur-

chased us for ever a house in heaven, a house that will never decay, but stand eternally: meaning that the money he had given to the poore, had purchased them a house in heaven, where all good deeds are rewarded. But never after that time, would his wife give him any more money, but kept it secret alone to her selfe. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my mind was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not here found that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF OXFORD.

THERE was upon a time (quoth another of the jurie) a certaine merry black-smith dwelling in Oxford, who upon a great festival-day, was invited to dine at a noblemans table, who kept a house some two miles off; and being a merry conceited fellow, and full of jestes, he was placed amongst both honorable and worshipfull personages: to which table, amongst many other dainties, there was served in two gurnet fishes; the one being of an exceeding great bignes, was set before the nobleman himselfe; the other being a very little one, was placed in the dish that stood just before this same black-smith, who being in his merry moode, and having a desire to taste of the bigger fish, tooke the little one in his hand, and laide it close to his eare, harkning to it as though it would have spoken: which when the nobleman perceived, he greatly marvelled, and demaunded the cause of his doing so? Oh, my good

lord, quoth hee, from a friend of mine lately drowned in the seas, I would gladly heare some newes; concerning whom I have asked this little fish, and he sayth, that as yet he can tell little, by reason of his tender age, but he hath an olde kinsman (he sayth) can tell more of the matter, which now lyeth there in the dish before you, therefore I beseech your honour let me talke with him a little. Herewithall the nobleman and his gwestes were greatly delighted, and so reached him downe the bigger fish; wherein the merry black-smith had his desire, and withall was well satisfied and contented. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolerie, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF WARWICKE.

Not many yeeres ago (quoth another of the jurie) there was dwelling in Warwicke a plaine country farmer, but none of the wisest: who on a time rysing early in a morning, found his hose eaten and gnawne with rats; and being therewith greatly troubled in minde, thinking the same to be some token of misfortune comming towards him, went unto a neighbour of his to crave his advice and counsell therein, and to know what it signified: saying that it was the strangest thing that ever he saw. But his honest neighbour noting the simplicitie of his wit, presently made him this answere. Surely, good neighbour (quoth he), this

is no such strange thing as you speake of; but if your hose had eaten the rattes, then had it been a strange thing indeed. Hereupon the poore farmer, seeing himselfe thus flouted to his face, went his way all ashamed. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolerie, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF COVENTRIE.

UPON a time there was (quoth another of the jury) a certaine petty-cannon dwelling in Coventrie, to whose house, upon a high feastival day, there came an expeart and curious musition, but very poore (as commonly men of the finest qualities be) and in hope of a reward offered to shew him the rarest musicke that ever he heard. Wilt thou so? quoth the petty-cannon; well, shew thy best, and the more cunningly that thou playest, the greater reward thou shalt have. Hereupon the poore musition cheered up his spirits, and with his instrument plaide in a most stately manner before him a long season: whereunto the petty-cannon gave good care, and on a sodaine startes up, and gets him into his study, where he remained some three or foure houres, not regarding the poore musition that all this while stood playing in the hall, hoping for some reward or other: afterwarde when it grew towards supper time, downe came the petty-cannon againe, and walkes two or three times one after another by the

musition, but sayes never a word; at which the musition began to marvell; and having nothing all this while given him for all his laboure, he boldly asked his reward. Why, quoth the petty-cannon, the reward I promised thee, I have already payde. As how? quoth the musition; as yet was nothing given me. Yes, quoth the petty-cannon, I have given thee pleasure for pleasure; for I have as much delighted thee with hope, as thou hast done me with musick. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF LESTER.

A certaine knight there was (quoth another of the jury) that on a time as he rode through Lester, had an occasion to alight and make water, and walking afterward a foote through the streetes, there came unto him a poore begger-man and asked of his worship one penny for God's sake. One penny, quoth the knight, that is no gyft for a man of worship to give. Why then, quoth the begger, give me an angell? Nay, that (sayd the knight) is no almes for a begger to take. Thus both wayes did he shake him off, as one worthy of no reward for his presumption. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this is likewise pretty foolerie, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF NOTTINGHAM.

THERE was of late in Nottingham (quoth another of the jury) a certaine justice of peace, who one time ryding through the streete, he met with a swaggering companion called Cutting Tom; who in a braverie tooke the wall of M. Justice, and almost tumbled both him and his horse downe into the dirt. Whereupon in an anger he caused the ruffian to be staide; and asked him what he was? Mary (quoth Cutting Tom) I am a man as you are. But, quoth the justice, whom dost thou serve? Whom do I serve, quoth he, why I do serve God. Serve God, sayd the Justice, what dost thou mocke mee? goe carry the knave to prison, Ile teach him some other answer, then to say I serve God. To the jaile was he born, where for that night he lay, and on the morrow brought before him againe. Now, sirra, quoth the justice, are you better advised yet? tell me who do you serve now? Why, quoth Cutting Tom, I serve God still. But, sayd the justice, dost thou serve no body else? Yes, quoth he, I serve my Lord President of Yorke. Gods body, knave, why didst not say so at first? Mary, quoth he, because I had thought you had loved God better then my Lord President; for now I see for his sake I am set at liberty, and not for Gods: therefore Ile serve God no more, but stil my Lord President. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

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THE FOOLE OF LINCOLNE.

As I heard say (quoth another of the jurie) there dwelled of late a certaine poore labouring man in Lincolne, who upon a time, after his wife had so reviled him with tongue mettle, as the whole streete rung againe for wearinesse thereof, at last he went out of the house, and sate him downe quietly upon a blocke before his owne doore; his wife being more out of patience, by his quietnes and gentle sufferaunce, went up into the chamber, and out at the window powred downe a pisse-pot upon his head; which when the poore man saw, in a merry moode he spake these words: Now surely, quoth he, I thought at last that after so great a thunder, we should have some raine. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere to be found that I looke for.

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THE FOOLE OF YORKE.

OF late there was dwelling in Yorke (quoth another of the jury) a certaine merry cloathyer, a passing good house-keeper, and one whose table was free for any man: but so it hapned on a time, amongst many other sitting at his table, there was a countrey gentleman named Maister Fuller; with whom as then he meant to be merry, and therefore finding occasion, he spake as foloweth. Now, I pray you, Maister Fuller, quoth

he (having as then divers sortes of wildfoule upon the table) which doe you thinke the better meat, of a partridge or a woodcocke? Mary, quoth he, I do think a partridge. Not in my minde, quoth the cloathyer, for I take a woodcocke to be the better meate; for a woodcocke is fuller in the wing, fuller in the legge, fuller in the pinion, and fuller is the woodcock in all places; at which the whole company laughed hartely, and M. Fuller heard himselfe called woodcocke by craft. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF DURHAM.

UPON a time (quoth another of the jury) there was a certaine lewde pilfring fellow that served a gentleman of Durham, whom he kept for no other purpose, but onely to make cleane the yardes, sweepe the streetes, fetch in water, and such other drudgeries: this fellow upon a time having stolne and convaide away certaine trifling thinges out of his masters house, as he had done before in divers places where he dwelt, and being now detected for the same, and brought before his M., his excuse was, that by no meanes he could do withall, for it was his fortune to steale, and who (quoth he) can withstand his hard fortune? Why then, said his maister, it is also thy hard fortune to be whipt, which being likewise thy destiny, thou canst not prevent it. Here the ser-

vant alleadged that fortune was the cause of his fault, the master likewise returneth, that fortune was the cause of his punishment: to be short, it was the poore fellowes hard fortune to be well whipt, and so turned out of service. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolerie, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF WESTCHESTER.

UPON a time (quoth another of the jury), there was a widow woman dwelling in Westchester, that had taken a certaine sum of mony of two cony-catchers, to keepe upon this condition, that she should not deliver it againe to the one without the other: but it so hapned that within a while after, one of these coney-catchers fayned his fellow to be dead, and came in mourning cloathes to the woman and demaunded the money. The simple woman thinking his words to be true, beleeved that his fellow was dead in deed, and therepon delivered him the money: now within few dayes after commeth the other conicatcher, and of the woman likewise demaundeth the same money; but understanding of the delivery thereof before to his fellow without his consent (as the bargaine was made), he arrested the poore woman to London, and brought her to great trouble: but being at last brought to tryall before the judges of the court, she sodainely slipt to the barre, and in this manner pleaded her owne cause. My good Lordes

(quoth she) here is a fellow troubles me without cause, and puts me to a needles charge: what need he seeke for triall, when I confesse the debt, and stand heere ready to deliver his money? Why, that is all, quoth the conicatcher, that I demaund. I, but (quoth the woman) do you remember your condition? which is, that I must not deliver it to the one without the other; therefore, go fetch thy fellow, and thou shalt have thy mony. Hereupon the conicatcher was so astonished that he knew not what to say, for his fellow was gone, and he could not tell where to find him: by which meanes he was constrained to let his action fall, and by the law was condemned to pay her charges, and withall great dammages for troubling her without cause. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this, in my minde, was pretty foolery: but yet the foole of all fooles is not heare found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

THERE was of late (quoth another of the jurie) a certaine simple fellow dwelling in Northumberland, that could not well remember his owne name, nor tell rightly to the number of just twentie, yet would many times give such good admonitions as the wisest man in all the countrey could not give better: but amongst all other, this one is worthy of memory, for going in an evening through a greene fielde, it was his chaunce to over heare a lusty young batehelor making sute to a

faire milkemayd for a night's lodging, who for the same demaunded a brace of angelles; whereupon, the foole sodainly starting backe, merrely said unto him: "Oh, my goode friende (quoth he), I prithee buy not repentance so dear:" signifying to the will, that after dishonest pleasure, repentance followeth speedily. Well, quoth Jack of Dover, this in my minde was foolish wisdom, but yet the foole of all fooles is not heere found, that I looked for.

THE FOOLE OF WESTMERLAND.

OF late was dwelling in Westmerland (quoth another of the jurie) a certaine simple taylor, that by his maister was sent some two mile off, to a gentleman named Maister Taylor, to demaund a little money due unto his maister, for making four sutes of apparell: but coming to the gentleman when he had not so much in the house as would discharge the debt, yet meaning not to abase his creddit so much as to tell the fellow so, he found this wittie shift to drive him off for that time, for when the taylors man demanded the money, he asked the fellow what he was? And, please your worship (quoth he), I am by occupation a taylor. A taylor is a knaves name (saith the gentleman); heeres every knave as well as myselfe wil be a taylor: but I prithee, friend, what taylor art thou? for there be divers sorts of taylers: there be taylors by name, there be marchant tailors, there be womens taylers, there be

snipping taylors, there be cutting taylors, there be botching taylors, and there be honest taylors, and there be thieving taylors. By this description of taylors he drove the poore fellow to such a quandary that he knew not what to say, but returned like a foole as he went, without either money or answer. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my mind was pretty foolery, but yet the foole of all fooles is not here found, that I look for.

THE FOOLE OF LANCASTER.

THERE was of late (quoth another of the jurie) a ploughman and a butcher dwelling in Lancaster, who for a trifling matter (like two fooles) went to law, and spent much money therein, almost to both their undoings: but at last, being both consented to be tride by a lawyer dwelling in the same town, each of them, in hope of a further favour, bestowed gyftes upon him: the ploughman first of all presented him a cupple of good fat hens, desiring Mr. Lawyer to stand his good friend, and to remember his suite in law; the which he courteously tooke at his handes, saying: that what favour he could show him, he should be sure of the uttermost. But, now, when the butcher heard of the presenting of these hens by the ploughman, hee went and presently killed a good fatte hogge, and in like manner presented it to the lawyer, as a bribe to draw him to his side; the which he also tooke very courteously, and promised the like to him as he did before

to the other. But so it fell out, that shortly after the verdict passed on the butchers side ; which when the ploughman had notice of, he came unto the lawyer, and asked him wherefore his two hens were forgotten? Mary, quoth he, because there came in a fatte hogge and eate them up. Now a vengeance take that hog, quoth the ploughman, that eate both my suit in law, and hens together. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolery, but yet the foole of all fooles is not heere found, that I looked for.

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THE FOOLE OF WORSTERSHIRE.

THERE was on a time, remayning in Worstershire, (quoth another of the jurie) a certain poet, or vercifier, that had dedicated a booke of poetrie to a merrie gentleman there dwelling, thereby to purchase his favour and reward withall: when the poet had presented the book unto him, the gentleman in outward show took it very kindly; but without any answere at all given to the poore scholler, he put it up into his pocket and went his wayes: within a while after, the poet (to put him in minde thereof) gave him certaine excellent verses, the which he likewise tooke, and put into his pocket without any answere at all; in this manner did the poore scholler oftentimes put the gentleman in minde of his goodwill, but all in vaine, for neither had he a reward nor answere at all backe. But now at last marke what hapned: when the gentleman saw he

could not be rid of the poet by anie means, himselfe with his owne handes writ certain verses in Latten, and when he spied him againe coming towards him, he sent him the verses by one of his servants : the scholler courteously tooke, and read them, not only with a loude voyce, but with pleasing jesture and amiable countenance, praysing them with wonderfull admiration ; and thereupon, coming nearer to the gentleman, he put his hand into his pocket, and pulled out a few single two-pences, and offered them unto him, saying : It is no reward for your estate (right worshipfull), but if I had more, more would I give : hereupon the gentleman in regard of the schollers good wit, called his purse-bearer, and commanded foure angells forthwith to be given him. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolerie, but yet the foole of all fooles is not heere found, that I look for.

↓ THE FOOLE OF WINSOR.

UPON a time, there was in Winsor (quoth another of the jurie), a certaine simple outlandish doctor of phisicke, belonging to the Deane, who on a day being at dinner in Eton Colledge, in a pleasant humor asked of Maister Deane what strange matter of worth he had in the colledge, that he might see, and make report of when he came into his own countrey ? whereupon the deane called for a boy out of the schole, of some six yeeres of age ; who, being brought before him, used this

speech: M. Doctor, quoth he, this is the onely wonder that I have, which you shall quickly find, if you will aske him any question: whereupon the D. calling the boy to him, said these words,—My pretty boy (quoth he), what is it that men so admire in thee? My understanding, quoth the boy. Why, sayd the Doctor, what dost thou understand? I understand myselfe, said the boy, for I know myselfe to be a childe. Why, quoth the Doctor, couldest thou thinke that thou wert a man? Not so easely, M. Doctor, answered the boy, as to thinke that a man may be a child. As how, sayd the Doctor? By this, quoth the boy; for I have heard, that an old man decayed in wit, is a kind of child, or rather a foole. With that the Doctor casting a frowning smile upon the boy, used these words: Truly, thou art a rare childe for thy wit, but I doubt thou wilt proove like a sommer apple; soone ripe, soone rotten: thou art so full of wit now, that I feare thou wilt have little when thou art old. Like enough, sayd the boy; but will you give me leave to shew my opinion upon your wordes? Yes, my good wag (sayd he.) Then M. Doctor, quoth the boy, I gather by your words, that you had a good wit when you were young. The Doctor, biting his lip, went his way, very much displeased at the boyes witty reasons, thinking himselfe ever after to be a foole. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this, in my minde, was pretty foolery, but yet the foole of al fooles is not here found, that I look for.

✓ THE FOOLE OF DARBIE.

UPON a time, there chaunced (quoth another of the jurie) to come unto a gentlemans house at Darbie, a certaine goldsmith of London, who, after dinner, looking well upon the gentlemans cupboard of plate, where amongst many other peeeces very richly wrought, he had a chiefe likeing to two silver cups; the one was made in fashion of a tigar, the other of a crab-fish: whereupon he desired the gentleman to lend him for a day or two the cup made like a tigar, to make another by it; which having obtained, he carried it away with him, and kept it at his house full three months: which the gentleman nothing pleased with, sent to him for it: which having gotten home, it fell out that within few dayes after, the same goldsmith sent to the gentleman againe, to borrow his other cup of the crab-fish; to whose messenger the gentleman made this pleasant answer: I prithee, my good friend, quoth he, commende me to thy maister, and tell him I would be glad to doe him any pleasure, but seeing my tiger, which I tooke to be one of the swiftest beastes in the world, hath been three monthes in going between London and Darbie, truley I feare my crab is so slow, that if I should let him creepe out of my doores, he would be three yeares in comming home againe, and therefore intreat him to pardon me. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my mind was pretty foolery; but yet the foole of all fooles is not here found, that I looke for.

THE FOOL OF SHREWESBURIE. ✓

IN Shrewsburie there was of late (quoth another of the jurie) a substantial innkeeper, that kept a certaine foole in his house, of whom he demanded on a time, of what profession he thought most men of the towne to be of? who answered, that he thought they were phisitions. Phisitions, quoth the innkeeper; what wager wilt thou lay on that? Mary, answered the foole, I will lay five crownes, and that within few dayes I will approve it, or else I will pay the money. Well, said the innkeeper thou shalt either pay it, or be well payd for it, if it be not so: but if thou make it good, thou shalt have five crownes of mee. Content, quoth the foole: so upon the next morning he put a clout under his chin and over his mouth, and laying his hand under his jawes, went hanging his head, up and downe the towne, as if he had bin very sicke: but at last, comming into a cutlers shop, a friend of his, he made a great shew of the paine of the toothach, asking of him a medicine for the same? who presently taught him one, with which he thankfully departed: and with this device he went almost to every house of the towne, to learne a medicine for the toothach, setting downe in a booke divers medicines, with their names that gave them: which being done, he returned to the innkeeper, with his clout about his mouth, seeming to be sore payned with the toothach, which the innkeeper perceiving, in pittie brake into this speech: Alas, poore foole, never feare it, if it be but the toothach, Ile helpe

thee presently. I pray you do, (quoth the foole) for I am in cruell paine: which he no sooner taught him, but the foole, pulling off his clout, fell into a great laughing, with these words: This is the best medicine that ever I learned, for it hath not onely made me whole, but hath gotten me five crownes. As how? said the innkeeper. Mary, thus, quoth the fool: you layde a wager with mee, that most of the towne were not phisitions, and I have prooved that they be, for most part in every house I have learned medicines for my teeth, and they that give medicines can be no other then phisitions: in witnes whereof, see heere in my booke what is set downe. The innkeeper seeing himselfe thus overreacht, confessed the wager, and payde the foole his money. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my mind was pretty foolery, but yet the foole of all fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF WINCHESTER.

Not far from Winchester, there dwelled (quoth another of the jury) a certaine simple justice, to whom a country gentleman made complaint of the ill demeanors and disordered lives of many under officers in his libertie, requesting him that he would send for them, and put them in some feare: the which he promised to do: whereupon he sent his warrant for all the bayliffes, constables, headborroughes, and churchwardens, that were in his liberty, and putting them

altogether in a great chamber, he put on a night gowne which was furred with blacke lambe skins, with the wrong side outward, and so with his hand before his face, as halfe blinded, ran backwards at them, crying “Boe bulbagger,” as some use to feare children withal, and so, according to the gentlemans complaint, he feared them away. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolerie; but yet the foole of all fooles is not heere found, that I look for.

✓
THE FOOLE OF GLOSTER.

UPON a time, (quoth another of the jurie) a certaine fellow wanting money, came unto Gloster, where hapning into the company of a sort of maister colliars, he sodainly began this speech: My good friends (quoth he), if any of you will gaine by a poore man draw neare: I will give you that thing for a shilling a peece, which, if you use it well, shall be worth a crowne to you: whereupon the colliars, in hope of benefite, bestowed some few shillings upon him, and he to every one of them gave fower yardes of fine threede, which of purpose he had in his pocket: but to every one that receaved the threed he gave this item:—Take heed, quoth he, when you see a foole or a knave, that you let him not come neare you, by the length of this threed, and it will be worth a crowne the observing of it: whereat they all laughed to see themselves made fooles

in this manner. Well, quoth Jacke of Dover, this in my minde was pretty foolery, but yet the foole of all fooles is not heere found, that I look for.

✓ THE FOOLE OF DEVONSHIRE.

AFTER this, travelling from Gloster, I tooke my journey into Devonshire, where in the time of my continuance there, I had intelligence of a plaine countrey ploughman there dwelling, who for his simplenes almost every one made a foole of: but amongst the rest a certaine covetous gentleman, having a desire to a good milch cow which this poore ploughman had, would very often times say in his hearing, that what gyftes soever any man gave him with a goodwill, should before the yeeres end be turned double againe: this poore ploughman noting his wordes very often, and thinking to have two kine for his one before the yeeres end, which would, as he thought, be a great benefite to him, gave him his said cow: the covetous gentleman taking the same very gladly, meaning never to returne her backe, put her into his neathouse amongst his other kine. The poore ploughman hying himselfe home, daily expecting when his cow should come home double: at last unawares in an evening, he heard his cow low before his window, which by chaunce had broke out of the gentlemans stable, and an other fat oxe with her; which when the ploughman saw, he held up his handes blessing himselfe, saying, See how the Lord workes with this good

gentleman ; for he, pitying my estate, hath sent my cow double home in deed, the which I will here take at his hands very thankfully : so dryving them both into his house, he killed the fat oxe and salted him up in powdring tubbes, and caryed his cow the next morning againe to the gentleman, saying: And please your worship, yester night you sent her home to my house according to your promise, which heere I give to you againe to day, hoping still of your wonted curtesies. The gentleman not regarding his speeches, but thinking them to be mere foolishnesse in deede, tooke the poore mans cow againe, and put her into his stable amongst beastes as before he did: but the cowe not forgetting her old maisters house, came still once a weeke home with a fellow, and so continued until such time as the poore ploughman had sixe or seaven of the gentleman's best beeves in his powdring tubs ; but being discoverd, the gentleman could never by his owne wordes recover any thing at the poore mans handes. This in my minde was pretty foolerie: but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF CORNEWALL. ✓

Thus travelling with my privie search from Devonshire, I came to Cornewall, where after I had made my jorney, I was told of a humorous knight dwelling in the same countrey, who upon a time having gathered together in one open market place a great assemblie of

knights, squires, gentlemen, and yeomen, and whilst they stood expecting to heare some discourse or speach to proceed from him: he in a foolish manner (not without laughter) began to use a thousand jestures, turning his eyes this way, then that way, seeming alwayes as though he would have presently begun to speake; and at last, fetching a deepe sigh, with a grunt like hogge, he let a beastly loude fart, and tould them that the occasion of this calling of them together was to no other ende, but that so noble a fart might be honoured with so worthy a company as there was. This in my mind was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not yet found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF HAMPSHIRE.

AFTER this I tooke my journey from Cornewall, and came into Hampshire, where remayning in the towne of Southampton, I heard of a certaine old begger-woman, who upon a time came a begging to a Dutchmans doore there dwelling, and seeing a jacke an apes there on the stal mumping and moing at her, she, according to her wit, sayd: Oh, my pretty boy, quoth she, I prithee mocke me not, for I may be thy grandam by mine age: which words a young man of the house overhearing, sayd unto her, Oh, mother, you mistake; for this is no child you speake unto. No, is it not? quoth she: I pray what is it then? Mary, sayd the fellow, it is a jack an apes. A jack an apes! quoth

she: now, Jesus, what these Fleminges can make for money, thinking verily it had been a thing made by mens hand. This in my minde was a pretty foolerie, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF BARKSHIRE. ✓✓✓

TRAVELLING after this from Southampton, I tooke my journey into the country of Barkshire, where, not far from Reading, I heard tel of a certaine lewde doctor of phisicke, that bore such affection to a mealemans wife of the same countrey, that shee by no meanes could be rid of him, whereupon she certified her husband thereof: he in this manner was revenged on him. Thus it hapned upon a time this merry mealeman counterfeited himselfe to be starke mad, and caused his wife to send for this doctor with all speed: who no sooner received the message, as well to shewe his love to the woman he affected, as to have reward of her husband, came with all speed to this counterfeit patient: the newes of whose comming was no sooner brought to the meale-man, who attended his comming in his bed, but presently he made such a show of madnesse, as if he had been possessed with a thousand devils; to whose presence the doctor being brought, with many chearfull words he comforted the meale-man, who stared in his face, as if he would have torn him in peeces, yet ceased not his friendes about him to yeeld the doctor many thanks, beseeching him to regard the manner of

his fits, and to view the water he made that morning, to which he willingly agreed: for which purpose there was prepared in an urinall the water of a mare great with fole, which the doctor viewed and again revewed, having never seene the like before, casting many doubtles of the meale-mans recoverie, standing thus in a quandary, as one driven to a non-plus: which by the mealemans friendes being perceived, they drew him secretly into another roome, earnestly desiring him to shew his opinion of the disease, whether it were dangerous or no. The doctor being loath to speake what he found, yet to satisfie their mindes, he thus sayd: Be it knowne, quoth he, that the strangenes of the water, sheweth a thing contrary to nature, for by it I see he hath within his body some lyving forme, and a child it is in my opinion, for which I am sorry, and desire you that be his good friendes, to pray for him, that God may take mercy on his soule. Hereupon the mealemans wife being then present, and meaning with the rest to follow still the jest, hearing of so strange a report, cryed out against her husband, fayning a desembling cry, and wishing herselfe never to have been borne, rather then to live a poynting stocke in the world: which speech being verie well delivered, as one possessed with a divell, she in a great rage flung away from the company, and would not be intreated to returne againe. The doctor having heard so woefull a cry proceed from the saint he so dearly loved, thought all had bin faithfully ment, which was faynedly spoken; therefore going secretly alone unto her where she sate,

and in briefe termes of wooing, promised her, if she would grant to become his wife, he would sodainely end her grieve by the death of her husband, therefore say amen to my sute, and I will give him such a drinke as soone will dispatch his life. The woman not as yet meaning to marre the pastime they intended, requested him to stay for her answeare till the morrow, and to take a hard lodging in her house for that night, to which the doctor most willingly agreed, and so, after supper was ended, he was conducted to his bedde, where he was no sooner warme, but the mealeman playing his mad pranks, entered the chamber, breaking open the doore to the doctors admiration; who in a fearefull maner asked what he wold have? Villaine, quoth the mealemam, be still, or die upon my knife. The D. knowing it was but follie to resist a mad man, most quietly yeelded to his will: whereupon the mealeman binding him hand and foote called in his friendes, who came in disguised, and with burtchin rods so belabored the doctor, as they left him no skinne on his body: that done, they plunged him in a tubbe of salt brine over head and eares, that he forgot his love, and almost himselfe; so leaving him to his rest till morning, and then they brought with them a surjion, who in the presence of them all cut out his stones: which being done, and the wound drest, they caused him upon a mangie jade to be horst, and so sent him away to seeke his fortune. This in my mind was pretty foolerie, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I look for.

THE FOOLE OF ESSEX.

AFTER this, I tooke my journey from Berkshire, and came into Essex, where searching up and downe the countrey, I was tolde of a certaine widow dwelling there that was evermore troubled with foure importunate suters: namely: a lawyer, a merchant, a souldier, and a courtier; every one of them so earnest in their affections, that no nay would serve turne, for the widow they must needes have, whether she will or no: but she bearing more love to the courtier then to all the rest, she like a wily wench, rid them off in this manner: to the lawyer she first comes and secretly comfortes him, saying, that above all others she had chosen him for her husband, and none but he; but quoth she, you know how I am troubled with my other suters, and except we be secretly convaide to church without their knowledge, surely we shall by them be intercepted; therefore to morrow morning Ile have you tied up in a meale sacke heere in my house, and by a porter (which I will sende) shal be borne to Chensford, where I in mans apparel will stay your comming, and so without any of their suspicions we will be married together: which pollicie the lawyer so well lyked of, that he was got readie in the sacke by three a clocke the next morning. But now the widdow in the meane time, had told the merchant, that shee would be his wife, and none but his, and that hee the same morning should come like a porter, and fetch her to church tyde up in a meale-sacke; the which he was very diligent

to doe; and attyred thus in a porters apparell, he was set to carry the lawyer in the sacke to Chensford instead of the widdow: who being both deceived and gone forward on their jorney, she sent the souldier after them (disguised like a singer) to belabour their fooles coates soundly, with this condition, that at his returne she would make him her husband. This hope caused the souldier to be as willing to performe her desire, as she to command his labour. But now marke the jest; whilst these three were sent like woodcocks to Chensford, the courtier and she were maryed together at Burntwood. Which in my minde was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLE OF LONDON.

AT my first entrie into London, and making my privy search there for this aforesayd foole, I was told of a rich usurers sonne there dwelling, who at his fathers discease was left owner of a very sumptuous house, with great store of lands belonging thereunto: which humerous young man upon a time seeing one of his neighbors having built his house in forme of a castle, with ditch and rampires about it, he desired to have his made of the like fashion; the which being no sooner finished, but he saw another of his neighbors have a faire set of apple trees in the forme of an orchard, he desired to have the like, and caused his aforesaid house

to be plucked downe, and planted in the place such a set of apple trees as the other man had; which being come to a good groath, he caused them also to be rooted up, saying, it were far better to have it a field of cabages: and in the ende his sumptuous house came to be a garden of cabages: yet not suffised with this, he in an other humor, bought all the geese in that country, supplanted his garden of cabages, and made it a faire greene for these creatures to graze upon; and being a friend of his asked wherefore he did so? he answered that from geese came feathers, wherewith to make bouldsters and beds, and of them he had greater neede then of cabages, or such like thinges, that grow in gardens. This was pretty foolery, but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not heere found, that I looke for.

THE FOOLES OF PAULES, OR FOOLES IN GENERALL.

WELL (quoth one of the jury), if we cannot finde the foole we looke for amongst these fooles before named, one of us will be the foole, for in my minde, there cannot be a verier foole in the world then is a poet: for poets have good wits, but can not use them; great store of money, but can not keepe it; and many friends till they lose them: therefore we thinke fit to have a parliament of poets, and to enact such lawes and statutes, as may proove beneficial to the commonweath of Jacke of Dovers motly coated fooles.

THE
PENNILES PARLIAMENT
OF
THREED-BARE POETS :

OR,
ALL MIRTH AND WITTIE CONCEITES.

Printed at London, for William Barley, and are to be sold
at his Shop in Gracious-streete, neere
Leaden-hall-gate.

1608.

THE PENNILES PARLIAMENT

OF

THREED-BARE POETS.

1. FIRST of all, for the increase of every fool in his humour, we think it necessary and convenient, that all such as buys this book, and laughs not at it, before he has read it over, shall be condemned of melancholy, and be adjudged to walk over Moorfields, twice a week, in a foul shirt, and a pair of boots, but no stockings.

2. It is also agreed upon that long-bearded men shall seldom prove the wisest ; and that a niggards purse shall scarce bequeath his master a good dinner ; and, because water is like to prove so weak an element in the world, that men and women will want tears to bewail their sins ; we charge and command all gardeners to sow more store of onions, for fear widows should want moisture to bewail their husbands funerals.

3. In like manner we think it fit, that red wine should be drank with oysters ; and that some maidens shall blush more for shame than for shame-facedness. But men must have care, lest, conversing too much with red petticoats, they banish their hair from their

heads, and by that means make the poor barbers beggars for want of work.

4. Furthermore, it is lawful for those women that every morning taste a pint of muscadine with eggs, to chide, as well as they that drink small beer all the winter ; and those that clip that they should not, shall have a horse-night-cap for their labour. Gentlemen that sell land for paper, shall buy penury with repentance ; and those that have most gold, shall have least grace ; some that mean well, shall fare worse ; and he that hath no credit, shall have less commodity.

5. It is also ordered and agreed upon, that such as are cholerick, shall never want woe and sorrow ; and they that lack money, may fast upon Fridays, by the statute : and it shall be lawful for them that want shoes, to wear bootes all the year ; and he that hath never a cloke, may, without offence, put on his best gown at Midsummer ; witness old Prime, the keeper of Bethlem dicing-house.

113 6. In like manner, it is agreed upon, that what day soever St. Pauls church hath not, in the middle aile of it, either a broker, masterless man, or a pennyless companion, the usurers of London shall be sworn by oath to bestow a new steeple upon it ; and it shall be lawful for coney-catchers to fall together by the ears, about the four knaves at cards, which of them may claim superiority ; and whether false dice, or true, be of the most antiquity.

7. Furthermore, we think it necessary and lawful for the husband and wife to fall at square for superiority, in such sort as the wife shall sit playing above in the chamber, while the husband stands painting below in the kitchen. Likewise, we mark all brokers to be knaves, by letters-patents ; and usurers for five marks a-piece, shall lawfully be buried in the chancel, though they have bequeathed their souls and bodies to the devil in hell.

8. In like manner, it is thought good, that it shall be lawful for muscadines, in vintners cellars, to indict their masters of commixion ; and serjeants shall be contented to arrest any man for his fees. Ale-wives shall sell flesh on Fridays without licence ; and such as sell beer in halfpenny pots, shall utter bread and cheese for money through the whole year ; and those that are past honesty and shame shall smile at sin ; and they that care not for God, prefer money before conscience.

9. Furthermore, it shall be lawful for footstools (by the help of womens hands) to fly about without wings ; and poor men shall be accounted knaves without occasions ; those that flatter least, shall speed worst ; and pigs (by the statute) shall dance the anticks with bells about their necks, to the wonder and amazement of all swineherds.

10. In like manner it is convenient, that many men shall wear hoods, that have little learning ; and some

surfeit so much about wit, and strive so long against the stream, as their necks shall fail them ; some shall build fair houses by bribes, gather much wealth by contention, and, before they be aware, heap up riches for another, and wretchedness for themselves.

11. Furthermore, it shall be established for the benefit of increase, that some shall have a tympany in their bellies, which will cost them a child-bearing ; and, though the father bear all the charges, it shall be a wise child that shall know his own father.

12. It shall be lawful for some to have a palsy in their teeth, in such sort, as they shall eat more than ever they will be able to pay for : some such a megrim in their eyes, as they shall hardly know another mans wife from their own ; some such a stopping in their hearts, as they shall be utter obstinate to receive grace ; some such a buzzing in their ears, as they shall be enemies to good counsel ; some such a smell in their noses, as no feast shall escape without their companies ; and some shall be so needy, as neither young heirs shall get their own, nor poor orphans their patrimony.

13. Also, it is enacted and decreed, that some shall be so numerous in their walks, as they cannot step one foot from a fool ; some so consumed in mind, as they shall keep never a good thought to bless themselves ; some so disguised in purse, as they count it

fatal to have one penny, to buy their dinners on Sundays ; some so burthened in conscience, as they account wrongful dealing the best badge of their occupation.

14. But, amongst other laws and statutes by us here established, we think it most necessary and convenient, that poulterers shall kill more innocent poultry by custom, than their wives and maids can sell with a good conscience ; also it is ordered and agreed upon, that bakers, woodmongers, butchers, and brewers, shall fall to a mighty conspiracy ; so that no man shall have either bread, fire, meat, or drink, without credit or ready money.

15. Sycophants by the statute shall have great gifts, and good and godly labours shall scarce be worth thanks : it is also thought necessary that maidens about midnight shall see wonderous visions, to the great heart-grief of their mothers.

16. Furthermore, it is marked and set down, that, if lawyers plead poor mens causes without money, Westminster-hall shall grow out of custom, to the great impoverishing of all nimmers, lifters, and cutpurses. Those that sing bass, shall love good drink by authority ; and trumpeters, that sound trebles, shall stare by custom. Women that wear long gowns, may lawfully raise dust in March ; and they that keep a temperate diet, shall never die on surfeits.

17. In like manner, it shall be lawful for sailors and soldiers to spend at their pleasures what pay they get by their sword ; and if the treasurer pay them any thing beyond account and reckoning, if they build not an hospital therewith, they may bestow it in apparel by the statute.

18. It is further established and agreed upon, that they that drink too much Spanish sack, shall, about July, be served with a fiery-face ; but oh ! you ale knights, you that devour the marrow of the malt, and drink whole ale-tubs into consumptions, that sing Queen Dido over a cup, and tell strange news over an ale-pot ; how unfortunate are you, you shall p-ss out that which you have swallowed down so sweetly ; you are under the law, and shall be awarded with this punishment, that the rot shall infect your purses, and eat out the bottoms before you be aware.

19. It is also agreed upon and thought necessary, that some womens lips shall swell so big, as they shall long to kiss other men beside their husbands ; others cheeks shall be so monstrously out of frame, as they cannot speak in a just cause without large fees ; some with long tongues shall tell all things which they hear ; some with no brains shall meddle much and know little ; and those that have no feet, may by the statute go on crutches.

20. Furthermore, it is convenient and thought meet

that ale shall exceed so far beyond its bounds, as many stomachs shall be drowned in liquor, and thereupon will follow the dropsy, to the great benefit of all physicians : it is lawful for some to take such purgative drugs, that, if nature help not, the worms, in the churches of London, shall keep their Christmas at Midsummer in their bellies; but tailors, by this means, shall have more conscience ; for, where they were wont to steal but one quarter of a cloke, they shall have due commission to nick their customers in the lace, and, besides their old fee, take more than enough for new fashions sake. But now, touching these following articles, we are to advise old men to look with spectacles, lest in finding over many wise lines, they wax blind with reading.

21. But now, touching the benefit of private houses, by our rare and exquisite judgments, we think it very commodious that those married men of weakest wit, and worse courage, should provide themselves with good weapons, to defend themselves from assaults, which shall assail them about midnight ; and it shall be lawful for all wives to have a masculine courage, in such sort, that they who have had their wills to this hour, shall have the mastery all the year after ; and those husbands which do not valiantly resist them, shall be awarded to pay a sheeps head to their next neighbour, in penance for their folly.

22. As by our provident judgments we have seen

into lamentable miseries, incident in these parts of the world; so, for the reformation thereof, we do ordain and enact, that the oil of holly shall prove a present remedy for a shrewd housewife, accounting Socrates for a flat fool, that suffered his wife to crown him with a p-ss-pot; ordaining, that all those that give their wives their own wills, be fools by act of parliament.

23. Also, it is further established and agreed upon, that Essex calves shall indict butchers knives of wilful murder; and whosoever will prove a partial juryman, shall have a hot sheeps skin for his labour. Bow-bell in Cheapside, if it break not, shall be warranted by letters patents to ring well; and, if the conduit-heads want no water, the tankard-bearers shall have one custard more to their solemn dinners, than their usual custom.

24. Moreover, it is thought good, that it shall be lawful for all tripe-wives to be exquisite physicians, for in one offal they shall find more simples, than ever Galen gathered since he was christened; besides, if dancers keep not tide and time in their measures, they shall forfeit a fat goose to their teacher, for their slender judgment. The French *morbus*, by commission, shall be worth three weeks diet; and they who have but one shirt to shift them withal, may, by the law, strain courtesy to wear a foul one upon the Sunday; also our commision shall be sent forth for the increase of hemp, as not only upland-ground shall be plentifully stored

therewith, but also it shall so prosper in the highways, as the stalks thereof shall touch the top of Tyburn.

✓ 25. In like manner we think it necessary and convenient, that there shall be great noise of wars in taverns, and wine shall make some so venturous, as they will destroy Tyrone and all his power at one draught: also we think it meet that there be craft in all occupations, and those that are penitent in this world, shall have comfort in a better; silk-weavers, by the statute, shall prosper well, if they wash their hands clean on fasting-days, for otherwise, in soiling their work, they shall lose their work-masters; daws, by authority, shall leave building in steeples, and dwell in cities; and such as are cunning in musick, shall know a crotchet from a quaver: but let such men as instruct youth, be very circumspect; for if they learn more than their masters can teach them, they shall forfeit their wits to those that bring them up.

✓ 26. Furthermore, we think it most necessary and convenient, that the generation of Judas should walk about the world in these our latter days, and sell his neighbour for commodity to any man; but the usurers shall be otherwise disposed; for, having monthly taken but a penny in the shilling, ever since they first began their occupation, they shall now, with a good conscience, venture upon three-pence with the advantage; besides, many men shall prove themselves apparently knavish, and yet, in their own opinions, will not be so; and many

women shall imagine that there are none fairer than themselves.

27. Moreover, for the further increase of foolish humours, we do establish and set down, that fantastick devices shall prove most excellent; and some shall so long devise for other men, that they will become barren themselves; some shall devise novelties to their own shames, and some snares to entrap themselves with.

28. In like manner we think it most necessary, that those who be fortune-tellers, shall shut a knave in a circle; and, looking about for a devil, shall find him locked in their own bosoms: atheists, by the law, shall be as odious as they are careless; and those that depend on destiny, and not on God, may chance look through a narrow lattice at Footmans Inn. But my dear friends, the grocers, are plentifully blessed, for their figs and raisins may allure fair lasses by authority; yea, many men, by the statute, shall be so kind-hearted, that a kiss and an apple shall serve to make them innocents.

29. It is further agreed upon and established, that many strange events shall happen in those houses where the maid is predominant with her master, and wants a mistress to look narrowly unto her.

30. Also, we think it convenient, that some shall take their neighbours bed for their own; some the

servant for their master ; and, if candles could tell tales, some will take a familiar for a flea. Also, we think it meet, that there should be many fowlers, who, instead of larks, will catch lobcocks ; and many, for want of wit, shall sell their freehold for tobacco-pipes and red petticoats. Likewise, we think it convenient, that there should be many takers ; some would be taken for wise men, who, indeed, are very fools ; for some will take cracked angels of your debtors, and a quart of Malmsy, when they cannot get a pottle.

31. But, stay awhile ; whither are we carried, leaving the greatest laws unpublished, and establishing the less ? Therefore we enact and ordain, as a necessary statute, that there shall great contentions fall between soldiers and archers ; and, if the fray be not decided over a pot of ale and a black pudding, great bloodshed is like to ensue ; for some shall maintain, that a Turk can be hit at twelve-score pricks in Finsbury Fields ; *ergo*, the bow and shafts won Bullen ; others shall say that a pot-gun is a dangerous weapon against a mud-wall, and an enemy to the painters work ; amongst these controversies we will send forth our commission to god Cupid, being an archer, who shall decide the doubt, and prove that archery is heavenly, for in meditation thereof he hath lost his eyes.

32. O gentle fellow-soldiers ! then leave your controversies, if you love a woman ; for I will prove it, that a mince-pie is better than a musket ; and he

that dare gainsay me, let him meet me at the Dagger in Cheap, with a case of pewter-spoons, and I will answer it ; and if I prove not that a mince-pie is the better weapon, let me dine twice a week at Duke Humphrys table.

33. It is furthermore established, that the four knaves at the cards shall suddenly leap from out the bunch, and desperately prank about the new playhouse to seek out their old master, Captain Crop-ear ; also it is thought meet, that some men, in these days, shall be politick beyond reason, and write more in one lien, than they can prove in an age.

34. Furthermore, it shall be lawful for some to study which way they may walk to get them a stomach to their meat, whilst others are as careful to get meat to put in their bellies : likewise there shall be a great persecution in the commonwealth of kitchen-fees, so that some desperate woman shall boil, try, and see the poor tallow to the general commodity of all the whole company of tallow-chandlers.

35. Alas ! alas ! how are we troubled to think on these dangerous times ; for tailors, by act of parliament, may lawfully invent new fashions ; and he that takes Irish *aquavitæ* by the pint, may by the law stumble without offence, and break his face ; and it shall be thought convenient, that some be so desperately bent, as they shall go into my Lord Mayors buttery, when

all the barrels be full, without either sword or dagger about them ; many men shall be so venturously given, as they shall go into Pettycoat-lane, and yet come out again as honestly as they went first in.

36. In like manner, it shall be lawful for Thames water to cleanse as much as ever it did in times past ; and, if the brewers at London buy store of good malt, poer bargemen at Queenhithe shall have a whole quart for a penny ; St. Thomas's onions shall be sold by the rope at Billingsgate by the statute, and sempsters in the Exchange shall become so conscionable, that a man without offence, may buy a falling band for twelve pence.

37. It shall be lawful for smiths to love good ale ; and, if it be possible, to have a frost of three weeks long in July, men shall not be afraid of a good fire at Midsummer. Porters baskets shall have authority to hold more than they can honestly carry away ; and such a drought shall come among cans at Bartholomew fair in Smithfield, that they shall never continue long filled.

38. The images in the Temple church, if they rise again, shall have a commission to dig down Charing-cross with their fauchions ; and millers, by custom, shall have small mind to morning prayers, if the wind serve them in any corner on Sunday. Those that go to wars, and can get nothing, may come home poor by authority ; and those that play fast and loose with

womens apron-strings, may chance to make a journey for a Winchester pigeon ; for prevention thereof drink every morning a draught of *noli me tangere*, and by that means thou shalt be sure to escape the physicians purgatory.

39. Furthermore, it shall be lawful for bakers to thrive by two things ; that is, scores well paid, and millers that are honest.

40. Physicians, by other mens harms, and church-yards by often burials.

41. Also, we think it necessary for the common-wealth, that the salmon shall be better sold in Fish-street, than the beer shall be at Billingsgate.

42. And hearts-ease, among the company of herb-wives, shall be worth as much money as they can get for it by the statute.

43. It is further enacted and agreed upon, that those that run four-score miles a-foot, on a winters day, shall have a sore thirst about seven of the clock in the evening.

44. And such as are inclined to the dropsy, may be lawfully cured, if the physicians know how.

45. Also, we ordain and appoint, that, if there be no

great store of tempests, two half-penny loaves shall be sold for a penny in Whitechapel.

46. Chaucers books, by act of parliament, shall in these days prove more witty than ever they were before; for there shall so many sudden or rather sodden, wits step abroad, that a flea shall not frisk forth, unless they comment on her.

47. O what a detestable trouble shall be among women about four-score and ten years old; for such as have more teeth about them than they can well use, shall die for age, if they live not by miracle.

48. Moreover, we think it necessary, that those that have two eyes in their head, shall sometimes stumble; and they that can neither write nor read, may as boldly forsware themselves as they that can.

49. And it shall be lawful for almanack-makers, to tell more lies than true tales.

50. And they that go to sea without victuals, may suffer penury by the statute.

51. In like manner, it shall be lawful for any man to carry about him more gold than iron, if he can get it.

52. But they that are given to sullen complexions, if they be females, must be more circumspect; for, if

they repent their hidden sins too much, they may by chance catch Heaven for their labour.

53. Therefore, let maidens take heed how they fall on their backs, lest they catch a forty weeks favour.

54. And he that hath once married a shrew, and by good chance buried her ; beware how he come into the stocks again.

55. Further, it shall be lawful for those that be rich to have many friends ; and they that be poor, may, by authority, keep money, if they can get it honestly.

56. Also, we command and charge all such as have no conscience, to do their worst, lest they die in the devils debt : as for the rest, they that have more money than they need, may help their poor neighbours, if they will.

57. In like manner, it shall be lawful for such as are subject to hot rheums, to drink cold drink : and those that have a mind to enrich physicians, to be never without diseases.

58. Also, soldiers that have no means to thrive by plain dealing, may, by the statute, swallow down an ounce of syrup of subtlety every morning ; and, if they cannot thrive that way, we think it necessary that, four times in the year, they go a-fishing on Salisbury plain.

59. Furthermore, for the benefit and increase of foolish humours, we think it necessary that those our dear friends, who are sworn true servitors to womans pautables, should have this order set down, that you suit yourselves handsomely against goose feast ; and if you meet not a fair lass betwixt St. Pauls and Stratford that day, we will bestow a new suit of satin upon you, so you will bear all the charges.

60. But as for your dear friends and scholars, thus much we favour you, you shall dine upon wit by authority ; and, if you pay your hostess well, it is no matter though you score it up till it come to a good round sum.

61. In like manner, it shall be lawful for maids milk to be good physick for kibed heels ; and a cup of sack to bed-ward a present remedy for the rheum.

62. Such as are sick in the spring, may take physick by the statute ; and those that are cold, may wear more clothes without offence.

63. It is best to ride in long journeys, lest a man be weary with going a-foot ; and more comely to go in broken stockings than bare-legged.

64. Further, it shall be lawful for some to be lean, because they cannot be fat.

65 Some, by statute, shall love beef passing well,

because they can come by no other meat ; and other some simper it with an egg at dinner, that dare manfully set upon a shoulder of veal in the afternoon.

66 Some shall be sad, when they want money; and in love with widows, rather for their wealth than their honesty.

67. It is also thought necessary, that some shall suspect their wives at home, because they themselves play false abroad.

68. And some love bowling-alleys better than a sermon.

69. But, above all other things, spirits with aprons shall much disturb your sleep about midnight.

70. Furthermore, it shall be lawful for him that marries without money, to find four bare legs in his bed ; and he that is too prodigal in spending, shall die a beggar, by the statute.

71. In like manner we think it necessary that he that is plagued with a cursed wife, have his pate broken quarterly, as he pays his rent.

72. Likewise, he who delights in subtlety, may play the knave by custom ; and, he who hath his complexion and courage spent, may eat mutton on fasting-days by the law.

73. And to conclude, since there are ten precepts to be observed in the art of scolding, we humbly take our leave of Duke Humphreys ordinary, and betake us to the chapel of ill counsell ; where a quart or two of fine 'Trinidado shall arm us against the gun-shot of tongue-metal, and keep us safe from the assaults of Sir John Find-fault. *Vale*, my dear friends, till my next return.

THE END.



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